

living with energy

IN IOWA



Guthrie County REC
A Tradeline Energy Cooperative

MARCH 2017

Co-op Q & A: We answer your frequently asked questions ▶ See page 5

What's hot in garden design?

High school students:
Win a spot on the
2017 Youth Tour!

Visit our website at www.guthrie-rec.coop

Maintain
proper clearance
around grain bins

Local hog farmer
finds **benefits**
in solar

IN THE NEWS

Chalfant attends MIB Conference



Member service clerk Marlene Chalfant attended this year's Momentum is Building (MIB) Conference in mid-February. Sponsored by Iowa's electric cooperatives and the Iowa Energy Center, MIB helps educate rural Iowa's home-building trade professionals on energy-efficient building and remodeling techniques. The conference also fosters a strong working relationship between local electric cooperatives and building trade professionals from rural Iowa.

"I enjoy attending the MIB conference each year," Chalfant said. "I find it valuable to be able to take the information I learn back to our members, who can then make informed decisions about energy efficiency upgrades or the latest 'green construction' techniques." ⚡



Office

1406 State Street - P.O. Box 7
Guthrie Center, IA 50115-0007

Office Hours

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Telephone Number

641-747-2206 or 888-747-2206
Calls answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Website

www.guthrie-rec.coop

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

STUDENT LEADERS

Scholarship helps past recipient ease debt stress

Every little bit helps when you're going to college, and for kids on their own for the first time, a scholarship can go a long way.

That's why Guthrie County REC is proud to offer our annual scholarships. Every year, we select three students to receive \$1,000 each toward their college expenses.

Aaron Klinge of Panora earned one of the scholarships in 2016. He now attends Iowa State University with a major in business and keeps busy with extracurricular activities and intramural sports. The scholarship, he said, has helped relieve some of the burden of his first-year expenses and will ease some of the debt he'll have after graduation.

If you know any high school seniors who are planning to continue their education at a full-time, accredited college, university

or vocational/technical school in the 2017-2018 school year, please encourage them to apply for the Guthrie County REC scholarship.

Applicants must be U.S. citizens, legal immigrants in a power line program or members of Guthrie County REC.

Applications must be postmarked on or before **April 7, 2017**. Winners will be posted at Guthrie County REC offices by **May 5, 2017**. Due to the volume of applications, only students awarded a scholarship will be notified.

Visit www.guthrie-rec.coop for more information and to download the scholarship application. ⚡



LEGAL ISSUES

State law requires notification of Alternate Energy Production

In 2012, the Iowa Legislature approved a bill that requires notification to electric utilities prior to installation of an alternate energy source. The notification requirement applies to any type of electric generating technology including:

- Solar
- Wind turbine
- Waste management
- Resource recovery
- Refuse-derived fuel
- Agricultural crops or residue
- Wood-burning facility that will be connected to an electric transmission or distribution line

Under this legislation, the owner of an alternate energy production facility must provide written notification to his or her electric



utility at least 30 days before construction or installation of the alternate energy source.

If you're considering installing an alternate energy system, please contact Guthrie County REC at 888-747-2206. Let us provide information and assistance before you decide to purchase any type of alternate energy system that requires interconnection with the electric grid. ⚡

We answer your frequently asked questions

BY REBECCA SCHWARTZ

When the phone rings at the Guthrie County REC office, you can be sure that our staff is ready to be helpful and knowledgeable in assisting with your inquiry. Whatever your questions, our staff is never too busy to take time to answer them. After all, we work for *you*.



Over the last couple of months, we've had some repeat questions, so I thought I'd take a moment to address them here.

Q. Why is my bill so high?

A. This is a common question, particularly in the cold months after the holidays. Remember, the bill you receive is for the previous month's usage. It may take a minute to remember that far back, but in general, can you remember if it was particularly cold? You may have turned up your heat during that time. Did you have family over for

a special occasion? You may have been running your electric oven or other electric appliances more. Were the kids home from college for an extended period of time? Additional people in the home can easily raise your bill temporarily. We encourage our members to check their electric usage regularly on the SmartHub application to avoid "sticker shock" when their monthly power bill arrives.

Q. I've seen a co-op utility truck in my neighborhood. What's going on?

A. In a perfect world, our utility crews would only need to work when it's above 70 degrees. But since we live in Iowa – and because our crews are dedicated to providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity to our members – they go out all year 'round to perform various tasks that keep the power flowing to you. Even in the winter months, our

crews are out clearing away brush and trimming trees in the right of way. Winter is a good time to remove dead, dry growth without the hindrance of new vegetation growth.

Q. I just got a great holiday deal on an energy efficient (dryer, refrigerator, dishwasher, etc.). What rebates do you have that I can take advantage of?

A. Good for you for purchasing an energy efficient product! Rebates are one way Guthrie County REC rewards its members for being energy efficient. And don't worry, if you purchased the product before Dec. 31, 2016, you can still submit a 2016 rebate request for the eligible product through March 31, 2017. Visit www.guthrie-rec.coop/content/rebates or call Marlene Chalfant, member service clerk, at 888-747-2206 and she'll walk you through the process. ⚡

Rebecca Schwartz is the communications clerk at Guthrie County REC.

ABCs OF ELECTRICITY

Reduce energy costs at home during spring break

If your family is planning to leave for even a few days, remember to prep your house for energy savings while you're away:

- Set your thermostat to around 55 degrees to keep your appliances and pipes from freezing. If you have pets, check with your vet about the best temperature to keep them comfortable.
- Turn down your water heater to the lowest possible (or "vacation") setting to keep the water from freezing in the tank and lines.
- Kill the energy vampires that



suck power even when they're not in use by unplugging every unnecessary appliance and electronic device, such as gaming systems, coffee pot, digital clocks, cell phone chargers and microwave.

- If you don't want your house to appear unoccupied while you're gone, invest in a few inexpensive timers and connect them to a few lamps in different rooms.
- Close all blinds and curtains to keep heat from escaping while you're away. ⚡

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win 10 shade trees!

Shade trees should be a major component in your plan for lowering your family's summer energy bills. To help you get started, we're



going to give 10 lucky electric co-op members 10 free shade trees up to a foot tall. The winners also will receive a one-year membership to the Arbor Day Foundation, which includes the organization's newsletter, *The Tree Book* and generous discounts on future tree purchases.

To enter the contest, visit the new *Living with Energy in Iowa* website at www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com and complete the entry form by March 31, 2017. ⚡

IN THE COMMUNITY

Show you care with RECare

Guthrie County REC is proud to serve our community by extending a helping hand to those in need and encouraging others to do the same. It's one reason RECare was established.

RECare is a program through which Guthrie County REC members can help their fellow members with electric bills and weatherization efficiency costs. Members may donate funds on a one-time or monthly basis for distribution by local community action agencies to low-income members. ⚡



YES, I want to be a part of members helping others and contribute to RECare.

- I will make a one-time contribution to RECare. My check is enclosed.
- I will contribute \$ _____ per month to RECare. I understand that this amount automatically will be added to my monthly electric bill.
- I will have my monthly electric bill rounded. I understand this amount automatically will be added to my monthly electric bill and round it up to the next highest dollar. For example, if your bill were \$154.85, then we would bill you \$155.00 and donate 15 cents to RECare. By the same token, if your bill were \$154.01, we would bill you \$155.00 and donate 99 cents to RECare.

Name _____

Guthrie County REC Acct. No. _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

Signature _____

Date _____

SAVING ENERGY

Local hog farmer finds benefits in solar

As solar generation systems are becoming more popular in Iowa, it's no surprise that farmers across the state are leading the way when it comes to this type of renewable energy. The idea started simply for hog farmer Kent Scheib, who operates a 7,200-hog facility in rural Guthrie County: "How can we reduce the cost of one of the operation's largest expenses – electricity?"

He began by comparing the benefits versus expenses of wind generation and solar generation. When he read an article about a hog farm near Kellogg with a solar array, he contacted the owner and paid a visit.

"The size of this array was the same size I needed and the farmer spoke highly of the company he used, so I contracted with Moxie Solar for my solar array," Kent said. "In the summer of 2014 when I started this, there weren't many solar companies to deal with. But Moxie Solar worked with Guthrie County REC on all aspects of permitting and the REC was on board to accomplish what needed to be done. The REC was helpful in our goal of erecting our solar array."



A ground-mounted system situated on the north side of the hog farm, the 117-kilowatt array will produce enough power to nearly eliminate the operation's monthly electric bill.

"I've had other hog farmers call and ask about the solar array's performance," Kent said. "It's been positive. Some people opposed to hog confinement buildings are positive about the reduced carbon footprint with solar. It's a good conversation starter on the positive aspects of solar."

Guthrie County REC is available to answer any of your questions regarding the installation of solar or wind generation on your property. Contact the co-op early in the planning process, so there will be no surprises later. ⚡



March is National Ag Month!

Guthrie County REC is proud to provide electric service to family farms like the Robson's in rural Guthrie Center.



Guthrie County REC
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

1406 State Street, Guthrie Center • 641-747-2206
888-747-2206 • www.guthrie-rec.coop